



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**Frank J. Magill,
Acting United States Attorney**

David Anderson, Public Affairs Specialist
(612) 664-5684; cell: (612) 730-2251

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Man pleads guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine in southern Minnesota

A 30-year-old man pleaded guilty today in federal court to one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute the highly addictive drug cocaine.

Antolin Mendez-Soto, unknown address, entered his plea before United States District Court Judge James Rosenbaum July 7 in Minneapolis. Mendez-Soto was indicted on March 10.

According to his plea agreement, Mendez-Soto knowingly and intentionally conspired and agreed to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute 5 or more kilograms of a substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine.

According to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) affidavit, a Jeep Commander was stopped on a traffic violation on Feb. 18 near Lincoln, Neb. During a search of the vehicle, police recovered 12 kilograms of cocaine. Each kilogram was individually packaged and was hidden either inside the front passenger door, the backseat driver's side door or the tailgate of the vehicle. Both people inside the vehicle were arrested.

Police learned that the vehicle was traveling to Rochester, Minn. On Feb. 17 in Colorado, Mendez-Soto provided the carriers with the cocaine and directions to Minnesota. The cocaine was delivered to Mendez-Soto at a hotel in Austin. Mendez-Soto was later arrested in Hayfield.

Mendez-Soto faces a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. Judge Rosenbaum will determine Mendez-Soto's sentence at a future date.

This case is the result of an investigation by the DEA, the Nebraska State Patrol, the Dodge County Sheriff's Office and the Austin Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Wolfe.

